

INSPECTION REPORT

HARDWICK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bury St Edmunds

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124839

Headteacher: Mrs. L. Austin

Reporting inspector: Ms. J. Jones
12460

Dates of inspection: 28th February - 2nd March, 2000

Inspection number: 187285
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mayfield Road
Bury St Edmunds
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. R. Heavisides

Date of previous inspection: March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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J. Jones	Registered inspector	Special educational needs	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
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			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
M. Christian	Team inspector	Information technology	
		Design and technology	
R. Duerden	Team inspector	Science	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Religious education	
P. Hanage	Team inspector	Mathematics	
P. Hooton	Team inspector	Geography	
		History	
		Equality of opportunity	
J. Marshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is much smaller than average for a middle school with 284 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs are both broadly in line with the national picture. There are 70 pupils on the register of special educational needs; for of these have statements of special educational need. The school is under-subscribed because there is no public transport to bring pupils from part of the catchment area. Increasing the roll is a school priority. The general attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average. There are two bilingual pupils, and a very small proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities. The school has a regular influx of pupils from traveller families at certain times of the year. There were none present during the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school in which teaching and learning are good. Most pupils' achieve the standards expected of them and their personal development is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The cost per pupil is high, mainly because the building and grounds are costly for the number of pupils. In view of these factors, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' attainment in English is above average.
- There is good teaching and learning in the majority of lessons and the atmosphere in the school is relaxed and friendly.
- There is good provision for teaching specialised subjects to all pupils, with sufficient specialist teachers and suitable resources for the whole curriculum.
- There is a rich curriculum at Key Stage 2 and sufficient flexibility for visits, such as field trips, to be a regular part of pupils' experience.
- There are good extra-curricular opportunities that are linked well to the main curriculum.
- The school has good links with the community and with partner schools.

What could be improved

- Attainment in information and communication technology is below national expectations.
- The amount of teaching time for a number of subjects in Key Stage 3 is too low to support high achievement.
- Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs do not have sufficiently clear targets and teachers do not use them effectively.
- In a small number of lessons, a few noisy pupils prevent others from learning well.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1996. Since then there has been satisfactory improvement. The quality of teaching has improved; the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen from around twenty per cent to four percent. Standards in mathematics and science have risen in line with national figures and in English the rise has been greater. Provision for information and communication technology has not improved sufficiently, because there is still no system to ensure that each pupil is covering the required curriculum in the subject. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues in the previous report. Teachers now identify problems quickly and pupils now achieve the standards expected of them. Art and design and technology now meet

statutory requirements fully. Marking is still inconsistent and reports, though improved, still do not tell parents enough about how well their children are gaining knowledge and understanding in each subject. The school's capacity for improving further is satisfactory. The headteacher moved to another post immediately after this inspection and the acting headteacher and acting deputy will be responsible for drawing up the action plan.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	A	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	D	C	C	
science	C	A	C	C	

English results have been consistently above average in the last three years. Mathematics results rose last year to average. Over time, results have improved in line with the national increase. The school has set realistic but suitably challenging targets for 2000 and 2001. Attainment seen during the inspection suggests that pupils are likely to achieve these, provided the improvement in mathematics is maintained. Pupils learn well in most lessons and usually achieve at least the standards expected of them. Standards are at least in line with expectations in all subjects except information and communication technology. In design and technology, French, music, physical education and religious education standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 3.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Positive; most enjoy coming to school and are fully involved in lessons and other activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; almost all pupils behave well in lessons and at other times, but a few pupils take advantage of teachers or support staff who do not know them well and behave badly, both in lessons and during lunch-time detentions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on well with teachers and each other. They respect each other's differing views and are helpful and trustworthy.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with the national average and unauthorised absence is below the national average.

There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the school. This is due to relaxed and good humoured relationships at all levels.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 9–11 years	aged 11-13 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

During the inspection, teaching in 96 percent of lessons was satisfactory or better, it was very good or better in 20 percent, and unsatisfactory in 4 percent. Teaching in English is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stage 3. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stages 2 and 3 in mathematics and science. Teaching in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory; teaching in separate lessons is good, but most information and communication technology is taught through other subjects where the focus of the lesson is not on information and communication technology so pupils spend too long working on their own; this slows their learning.

Literacy is well taught in English and most teachers in most subjects support this by teaching pupils to use technical terms correctly and by encouraging writing at length. Numeracy is taught effectively in mathematics and pupils apply their skills well in other subjects, such as science, history and geography, when doing graphs and simple calculations, or interpreting statistics.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs through special literacy and numeracy lessons. In other subjects, some teachers are very alert to their needs and modify work appropriately. This is particularly good in French, and some aspects of information and communication technology. However, individual education plans are not used effectively to help pupils work towards specific targets. Higher attaining pupils are usually given activities that challenge them, but there is a need to extend this in a number of subjects, including science and French.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The Key Stage 2 curriculum is broad. It includes French and drama and in Year 5 pupils have separate lessons in information and communication technology. The Key Stage 3 curriculum retains the breadth but the balance of time between subjects is unsatisfactory. There is too little time for a number of subjects, including physical education and French. The curriculum for information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Teachers know pupils well and support them effectively in most lessons. Teaching is particularly well matched to their needs in French. Individual education plans are not effective because they are too vague and do not explain how pupils are to be helped to reach their targets in all subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall. The personal, social and health education programme is well integrated into the curriculum. Opportunities for moral and spiritual development are satisfactory. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and learn about their own and others' cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after pupils well in a secure and relaxed environment. The school has satisfactory links with parents and enjoys their support. Teachers support pupils' academic and social development well and take effective measures to prevent bullying.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is satisfactory. The headteacher is supported by competent senior and middle managers and has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve. The headteacher currently has a heavy teaching timetable that is not sustainable for a long period.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have good links with the school and take a keen interest. They support the work of the school but do not take a strong role in shaping policy by questioning the senior management closely enough about policy decisions. Statutory requirements are met, apart from the non-compliance in information and communication technology.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is a satisfactory system for evaluating the work of the school, based on biennial reviews of departments. Teachers are observed teaching at least annually. The development plan incorporates a useful review that helps the school measure its progress against its own targets.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers are well deployed to teach their specialised subjects as much as possible. Accommodation is used efficiently and computer suites are well sited in open and accessible areas. Computers are not used efficiently enough.

The match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is good. Support and administration staff give valuable help in the smooth running of the school. Accommodation is sufficient and very well cared for. Learning resources are at least adequate in most subjects and there is a good stock of up-to-date computers. The school's application of the principles of best value is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good extra-curricular activities and opportunities. • The school helps to build children's confidence. • Children make good progress. • The school responds well to questions or problems. • Teachers have high expectations of pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents were not happy with the amount of work their children get at home. • Reports do not give enough information about how children are doing at school. • Some incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons disrupt classes. • Some incidents of bullying take too long to resolve.

The responses to the parents' questionnaire were positive. The greatest concern was with homework, but it is not clear whether parents want more or less. Inspectors agreed with the strengths identified by parents. They found that bullying is dealt with effectively and homework is usually appropriate. They agreed that the behaviour of a few pupils sometimes causes problems, particularly for new or inexperienced teachers, and they agreed that reports do not give enough information about children's progress. Inspectors did not agree with the concerns about homework or bullying.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Results in national tests, and teachers' assessments for 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science.

1. Results in the National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds at the end of Key Stage 2 were close to the national average in 1999 and close to results for similar schools. Over the last four years, results have risen in line with the national trend. There are however, differences in the performance of pupils in the three subjects tested. Results in English have been above average for the last three years and have risen at a faster rate than that seen nationally; two years ago the results were well above average. Teachers' assessments of 11 year olds in 1999 were close to, but a little above, test results in English.

2. In mathematics, test results have been just below average overall but improved in 1999 to reach the national average. The number of pupils reaching level 4 was below the national average in tests, although teachers' assessments showed that the number of pupils who had reached level 4 was close to average. This is because a number of pupils just missed reaching level 4 by one or two marks. Inspectors are satisfied that pupils reached average standards overall in mathematics in 1999.

3. Test results in science have been close to the national average over the last four years. In 1999 the proportion of pupils reaching level 4 and above in tests matched teachers' assessments. According to teachers' assessments, fewer pupils reached the higher levels in lessons than they did in the tests. This is due to a weakness in the assessment procedure. Attainment in science in 1999 was therefore average overall.

4. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls in any subject. The pupils for whom English is an additional language are bilingual and achieve standards at least as high as expected.

Standards seen during the inspection

Standards in English, and literacy across the curriculum

5. Pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 is in line with expectations. Pupils listen well to each other, respond with a good range of vocabulary, and write for a variety of purposes. By the time they leave at the end of Year 8, pupils are working at above average levels. Their writing is mature and wide-ranging and they communicate well. They do, however, make mistakes in spelling and punctuation, and although they are learning to recognise and correct these, they miss some, even after they have redrafted their work.

6. In other subjects, pupils use language effectively and are often encouraged to learn the technical words associated with such subjects as art, music and science. Pupils are expected to write in their own words, often with guidance to help them frame arguments and explanations in most subjects, including religious education, history and science. Worksheets are used sensibly and pupils are not over-dependent on them. There is a need for greater emphasis on 'key words' in subjects, and pupils do not use the 'spellchecker' facility enough when word-processing. Quite common words are often mis-spelled in science.

Standards in mathematics, and numeracy across the curriculum

7. Pupils are reaching average levels in mathematics, both at the age of 11 and when they leave at the end of Year 8. They use the basic rules of arithmetic and have an appropriate grasp of shape and space. Pupils' skills in numeracy are satisfactory. There is an emphasis in mathematics lessons on developing speed and accuracy in mental arithmetic.

8. These skills help their progress in other subjects. For example, in science pupils draw bar charts and plot line graphs with increasing accuracy as they move up the school. They use calculators correctly when analysing experimental results. In geography, pupils draw and interpret graphs of temperature and rainfall and use percentages correctly. Numeracy skills are exploited well in history, where pupils carry out population studies and analyse Census information.

Standards in science

9. Standards throughout the school in science are in line with expectations. Pupils have a sound knowledge of basic ideas and carry out scientific investigations with care and interest. However, they have more limited skills in making predictions and obtaining evidence based on their scientific knowledge and understanding.

Standards in information and communication technology

10. Standards in information and communication technology are below average except in Year 5 when pupils have separate lessons in the subject. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in a number of aspects of information and communication technology have fallen below the expected level, and this remains the case in Key Stage 3. Although pupils use computers in other subjects, the use is not planned systematically and there are not enough opportunities to reinforce basic techniques and, for example, common devices such as spellcheckers.

Standards in other subjects

11. Attainment is above national expectations, both at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 8 in design and technology, French, music and religious education. Attainment meets national expectations at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 8 in art, geography, history and physical education.

Pupils' achievements, in relation to what could be expected of them

12. In almost all lessons, pupils learn well and make at least satisfactory progress. In the majority of lessons progress is good. However, pupils achieve levels that are satisfactory overall in relation to their earlier knowledge and skills, because in a number of subjects the time allowed is below average and does not allow pupils to consolidate their learning. This is particularly evident in history, geography, French and physical education. Where more time is allowed, such as in English, or where the subject is particularly well organised, such as religious education or music, pupils' good learning leads to achievement that is above average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils are keen to come to school and have positive attitudes to school life and to their work. Behaviour overall is satisfactory and contributes to the good learning in most lessons. In most lessons, and around the school at breaks or lunchtimes, pupils behave well, and in some lessons they show maturity and commitment beyond their years. There is a small number of pupils whose thoughtless behaviour causes difficulties for some new or

inexperienced teachers.

14. The school has effective systems for dealing with serious misbehaviour and uses exclusion as a last resort. However, the number of permanent and temporary exclusions in the year prior to the inspection was above average. These were due to incidents of unacceptable behaviour by a small number of pupils. Most of these had troubled backgrounds, and had been excluded from other schools. The school works closely with external agencies when such pupils are admitted, and is often successful in helping them adjust to school life. Governors are involved appropriately in cases of exclusion.

15. Pupils are able to learn well because relationships between pupils and with teachers are relaxed and friendly and pupils respect the views of others. They are trustworthy and treat property, including the good stock of up-to-date computers, with care. This enables the school to give pupils unrestricted access to computers at all times, including breaks and lunchtimes.

16. Pupils cooperate well; they work successfully in groups in many lessons and often help each other, for example, when using computers. When they are asked to present ideas or work to the class, for example, when talking about their plans in design and technology, they do so with confidence, and listen to each other with interest. Bullying is rare and quickly dealt with when it happens. Pupils believe this is not a major problem, and value the school's positive measures to discourage bullying.

17. Pupils' personal development is good. The school council is a very effective way of involving pupils and can offer ideas to management. For example, the popular reward of being allowed not to wear uniform on a Friday, following a week of very good work and behaviour, was suggested by the school council. Pupils are happy to undertake a number of monitor duties, including selling stationery items at lunchtime and helping with lunchtime drinks. About 30 pupils in Years 7 and 8 are paired with younger children and regularly help them with their reading. Sports captains and vice-captains have stated duties that they carry out willingly.

18. Learning is supported by attendance levels that are close to the national averages with very little unauthorised absence. Parents generally respond well to telephoning on the first day of absence and send notes to explain absences. There is effective liaison with the education welfare services.

19. Overall the school has maintained the good standards noted in the previous report.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching is good overall. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning in around two thirds were judged to be good or better. Teaching in one fifth of the lessons seen was very good or excellent. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

- Teaching is satisfactory overall at both key stages in mathematics and science.
- In design and technology, geography, history, physical education and religious education, teaching is good at both key stages.
- Teaching in music is very good at both key stages.
- Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and good in Key Stage 3 in English and art.

- Teaching is good overall in French. There is more good teaching in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 2.
- In information and communication technology, teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching in separate lessons is good, but pupils are not learning to apply information and communication technology effectively enough in other subjects.

21. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is good. Since the previous inspection the curriculum has been altered so that most lessons are taught by subject specialists. This is apparent in their enthusiasm for their subjects and their skill in putting ideas over. For example, in a Year 5 religious education lesson on signs and symbols the teacher caught the pupils' attention right from the start by focusing on a wooden cross set up at the front of the classroom. This was followed by a well chosen Bible reading and the idea of the cross as a Christian symbol of hope was linked well to current events and symbols of hope in the lives of sufferers in Mozambique. In a Year 8 English lesson, pupils learned effectively to distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs through examples, such as the different meanings and use in sentences of 'to lie' and 'to lay'.

22. Planning in most lessons is good. Pupils learn effectively in many lessons because teachers outline the objectives for the lesson and make sure they are understood. This is particularly effective in French, because the teacher reminds pupils of the objectives at intervals in the lesson and asks them how well they are doing. The forty minute single lessons are too short for teachers regularly to spend time at the end reviewing with pupils how well the learning objectives have been met. Some planning, for example in science, identifies activities and resources to be used, but does not identify what the pupils should learn from the activities, so that teachers do not always put sufficient emphasis on this aspect of the lesson.

23. Teachers sometimes include a number of different activities to suit the attainment of pupils in the class. This was seen in a Year 7 geography lesson in which all pupils were researching National Parks before making their own brochure. Higher attainers were expected to work more independently, to find their own information and maps from the library or Internet, while other pupils were given more help and support.

24. Teachers are successful in reinforcing pupils' literacy and numeracy in subjects across the curriculum. They are most successful in encouraging literacy, for example, through insisting on the correct use of technical language, giving pupils plenty of opportunity to speak out in class, and demanding accurate written work. In a number of subjects, teachers support pupils who find writing difficult by providing them with a simple framework to organise their ideas and structure their sentences. Teachers know how much competence to expect of pupils when handling number and graphs, and use these skills when appropriate in a range of subjects, including French.

25. There is some effective use of computers in lessons. In a history lesson on Roman life pupils were asked to use a database to find out more about life in Rome and in Roman Britain. This worked well because the programme had been adapted so that pupils could be directed to more or less difficult texts according to their levels of attainment. However, there is a need for the use of computers to be more systematically planned into subjects across the curriculum.

26. In most lessons teachers have high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. Work is demanding enough for higher attainers, and others are given help, for example with their writing, so that lower attaining pupils do not get discouraged. Many teachers challenge pupils to think hard and deepen their knowledge and understanding

through searching questions and drawing out ideas from pupils. For example, in a Year 8 design and technology lesson, pupils had to justify their designs for a learning game for a small child with a particular learning difficulty such as visual impairment. The teacher questioned pupils closely, while listening to and valuing their suggestions. Pupils responded well, speaking out clearly and using technical language accurately.

27. In a few lessons learning is less effective than it should be because teachers do not give pupils enough time to think for themselves. This sometimes happens in science, when a teacher presses on with instructions and does not listen carefully enough to pupils' own ideas or value their contributions.

28. Teachers have a friendly, good humoured approach that encourages and supports pupils while still commanding their respect. They manage pupils well, so that learning is successful, both in small groups and when the class is being taught as a whole. There are a few lessons in which teachers are not able to keep the lesson flowing according to plan because they do not have strategies for managing the small number of uncooperative pupils. In these lessons, usually with new and inexperienced teachers, the pace of the lesson slows because pupils interrupt too often.

29. Teachers know their pupils well and most adapt their approach successfully to the needs of higher and lower attainers. They know when to intervene and help, and when to suggest that pupils should move on to another task. However, they are often not sufficiently aware of how pupils with special educational needs should be helped to achieve their individual targets, because targets on individual educational plans for these pupils are not clear enough. In some science lessons the teacher does not modify the work enough for lower attaining pupils; these pupils cope well when they are helped by a non-teaching assistant, but at other times they leave work unfinished.

30. Most teachers mark work regularly, but some marking is sketchy, or consists of encouraging comments but does not show clearly enough how the work should be improved. This was an issue in the previous report and still needs to be improved. Homework is set according to the school's well planned policy. The content and amount is appropriate and most pupils do it conscientiously.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

31. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with a number of strengths and a few, but important, weaknesses. These prevent pupils' achievements from being as high as they should be, when teaching and learning in most lessons are good.

Strengths

32. The school has successfully incorporated all the elements of the national strategy to improve literacy into English lessons, and this has raised standards in English and other subjects, such as history, where pupils imagine they are soldiers in World War 1 and write their own 'war poems'.

33. The curriculum includes the full range of National Curriculum subjects, and religious education and, in Key Stage 2, pupils have a wider than usual range of subjects because drama and French are studied from Year 5.

34. Personal, social and health education is taught within other subjects of the curriculum. This is well planned and successful. Pupils benefit from being taught aspects of the subject by teachers with the greatest expertise in those areas. For example, drama is used well for some aspects, such as bullying, and drugs and sex education are taught effectively in science.

35. Extra-curricular activities are a strength of the school. A lively and extensive programme of activities considerably broadens pupils' learning and sometimes links directly with their work in subjects. Opportunities include sports, theatre visits, an adventure trip to Wales, and visits to France. They are supported enthusiastically by pupils who enjoy the opportunity to mix with pupils of all ages. They appreciate the fairness in sporting activities where everyone is given a chance even if they are unlikely to make the school teams.

36. There are good links with local upper and lower schools. There is effective agreement between subject leaders in all three phases, about which areas of the National Curriculum are to be taught in each school. In history, geography and religious education, learning resources are shared between schools.

37. The school has a close relationship with the local community. There are visits to Bury St Edmunds, Colchester and local farms to bring history, geography and religious education alive, and there are useful links in science to local industries. There are frequent visitors to a number of lessons. These include a visiting artist appointed by the local education authority.

38. The provision for cultivating pupils' personal development is generally good and, at times, outstanding, as in the Year 8 religious education unit 'Who am I?' which very effectively helps pupils to think about personal values. Pupils' personal development is a main aim of the school and this is well reflected in all aspects of school life.

39. Pupils are able to use the library and computers freely outside lesson times to carry out independent research tasks, and they are supported well in French through a lunchtime language club based on the use of computers.

40. All pupils have access to the full curriculum provided by the school.

41. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in English and mathematics through being taught in smaller sets. They are helped effectively in some lessons by non-teaching assistants, and in a number of lessons teachers adapt the work well so that all can succeed. This is particularly evident in French where lower attaining pupils, and those with special needs sometimes make the fastest progress.

Weaknesses

42. The time allowed for a number of subjects is too low and does not make for a good balance in the curriculum. This is particularly evident in French, physical education, music, history, and geography. The time for French is particularly low and pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 8 largely because they make such good progress in Years 5 and 6.

43. The school is not meeting the National Curriculum requirements in information and communication technology. The subject is taught in separate lessons only in Year 5. In other years information and communication technology is taught through the other subjects of the curriculum. Computers are used in many subjects, often to good effect, and activities

using computers are having an increasingly positive impact on learning in art, history and especially music. However, the specific requirements of the National Curriculum are not built into teaching schemes.

44. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory. Teachers of pupils with statements of educational needs have copies of their statements, and all have access to the reviews and targets for pupils on the register of special educational need. However, these targets are not related closely enough to pupils' particular needs in lessons, so that teachers are not clear enough about what a pupil is expected to achieve.

45. The length of lessons does not help pupils to make the most of the time in a number of subjects. Single lessons of forty minutes are too short for teachers to set out the objectives for the lesson, get pupils working, sometimes at several activities, and round the lesson off with a useful review of what the pupils have learned. Double lessons are too long for non-practical subjects such as mathematics, so that pupils tire, their concentration slips, and they learn less well than they should.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

46. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In religious education units on 'belief and symbols' and 'celebrations' - especially the Year 6 work on 'milestones' – encourage pupils to develop a good awareness of spiritual values and tackle ideas such as personal beliefs and life after death. Other than in religious education the greatest emphasis on spiritual development is in assemblies and collective worship. The daily acts of collective worship are well planned and often make a powerful contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They give good opportunities for pupils to explore questions about meaning and purpose, values and beliefs. However, although planned around broadly Christian themes, too many of those seen did not meet the requirement of being broadly Christian in character. There is no planning to ensure that the requirement is met across the school year. The Wednesday form-based act of worship is particularly weak because the 'thought for the day' is too hurried. Although most staff value pupils' responses, in a small number of lessons teachers are less willing to listen to what pupils have to say and help them to develop their own ideas.

47. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities to enable pupils to learn about moral values. In English, moral issues are raised in discussions about books such as 'Goodnight Mr Tom' and 'Carrie's War'. Bullying issues are explored in drama lessons. In physical education, pupils are taught about fair play and respect for those in authority. They have a very good opportunity to consider moral and ethical issues in a Christian Aid/UNICEF presentation on 'slicing the banana'. This gives pupils the chance to think about how little Third World producers get in return for the crops that they grow.

48. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop socially. They learn the importance of working co-operatively in subjects such as science, drama, religious education and physical education. In history, a Year 6 visit to a Victorian Railway Museum gives pupils a very good opportunity to find out about Victorian culture and society. The School Council is a useful way for pupils to take on responsibility, demonstrate initiative and contribute to the life of the school.

49. There is good provision for pupils to find out about their own cultural heritage and that of others. They study classical literature in English, look at Jewish and Islamic culture in religious education and learn about earlier cultures in history. Some of the richest provision is in art and music. They explore Islamic and tribal art and the work of European and American artists. They are given plenty of opportunities to find out about European music as well as music from India, China and Indonesia. There are also opportunities for visits to the theatre and art galleries as well as having visiting artists in residence. However, there is little opportunity to learn about what other cultures have given to scientific and technological development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school has effective child protection procedures and a high regard for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The deputy head teacher is the designated person responsible for child protection and is fully trained in following all local authority procedures. All staff received training in child protection issues but this needs to be updated because new staff have joined the school since the last training session. The school has good contact with a range of support agencies including the school nurse and the local authority's learning support team.

51. There are well-developed procedures to care for pupils involved in minor accidents and there are trained first aiders on the staff. Appropriate portable electrical apparatus testing and fire safety testing has been done. Fire drills have been held regularly and effectively.

52. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory. All teachers assess pupils at regular and frequent intervals and the school records comprehensive information about pupils' academic performance. Within subjects, the use of assessment varies. There is good practice in French, where pupils know how they are doing in relation to all the elements of the National Curriculum, because they keep their own records. Pupils are motivated by this and keen to reach the next level. In a number of subjects, including science, pupils are tested at the end of units of work but do not know how they are doing in lessons, and do not have targets for further improvement.

53. Heads of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, through their teams of form tutors, keep a close watch on pupils' academic and personal development and support pupils in need, both formally and informally. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance.

54. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly. These pupils are well supported in basic skills by the special educational needs coordinator, and information about their assessments are passed on to teachers through staff meetings.

55. The school does not have procedures for monitoring the use of computers and recording what pupils know and can do. For example, pupils use a database in history, but the teacher cannot establish the level they reach in information and communication technology skills, although the levels reached in history are clear.

56. There is a system for dealing with incidences of poor behaviour and rewarding good attitudes and hard work. The school deals firmly and effectively with serious misbehaviour, but does not have a clear enough policy for minor disruption in lessons, such as repeated calling out or distracting other pupils. Most teachers manage these incidents well, so that that learning is not affected, but new and inexperienced teachers need more support through a whole-school strategy, applied consistently to all pupils. Lunchtime detentions

are used at present but they are ineffective and sometimes lead to further unsatisfactory behaviour in the detention itself.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. Most parents support the school fully and are happy with their children's work. They take an interest in their children's progress and help at home by encouraging reading and signing homework diaries regularly. The school keeps parents well informed about what their children will be studying in each subject at the start of the school year. Although there are no parents who regularly help in classes, the school has a very active parent -teacher association, with many parents giving help and supporting the fundraising and social events.

58. In the returns from the parents' questionnaire, a high proportion, around thirty per cent indicated dissatisfaction with the amount of work pupils have to do at home. It is not clear from the questionnaire, whether they think there is too little or too much. Parents' comments at the meeting and from letters sent to the registered inspector suggest that some parents think there is too little and some that there is too much. Parents are informed, in the home-school agreement, of the amount pupils are expected to do at home. Inspectors looked closely at the amount and quality of homework set and found it to be appropriate in reinforcing the work done in lessons, or encouraging pupils to carry out independent research.

59. Some parents feel that they have insufficient information about the progress their children make. This is justified. School reports have been revised since the previous inspection but they still do not give parents enough information about the progress their children are making, and what they need to do to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. Management and leadership are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear view of what sort of school this should be and carries the staff with her. She and her senior managers have established an ethos for learning in which pupils respect one another, think and act independently and grow in confidence as they move from Year 5 to Year 8. There is good emphasis on opportunities to learn about life and culture in other parts of this country, and world-wide.

61. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibility to set targets for the headteacher and deputy, to see that the school sets the required targets for test results, that the school's finances are in order, and that procedures for exclusions are followed correctly. Governors take a keen interest in the school and many have been on recent training courses.

62. There is, however, a need for governors to be better aware of information that gives a picture of how the school is doing in comparison with others nationally. This would enable them to question some of the decisions, for example, on the way the curriculum is planned or how computers are used, and check that these decisions can be justified. Informed leadership by the governing body is particularly important at present, because the headteacher left the school at the end of the inspection week to take over another school in the local authority.

63. Currently, statutory requirements are not being met in information and communication technology provision and this is a weakness.

64. Middle management is good overall, and in many areas it is strong. The two key stage coordinators lead their pastoral teams well, enabling class teachers to share information about pupils efficiently and ensuring that all pupils are known and cared for. Leadership is very good in French, music, religious education and physical education. Leadership is unsatisfactory at present in mathematics because there is no coordinator; a new appointment has been made to take effect next term. The management of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory because the ambitious plan to teach it through other subjects after Year 5 has not been fully realised, and this leads to some inefficiencies in the use of computers and unsatisfactory achievement by pupils. There needs to be greater focus on assessing and recording every pupil's attainment to see that teaching is fully effective and that all aspects of the information and communication technology programme of study are covered.

65. The school has a well planned system for monitoring teaching and learning, and the overall effectiveness of departments is reviewed biennially by senior managers. All teachers are observed teaching annually. Test results are analysed and the school is aware of its strengths and of those areas, particularly mathematics, that have not done as well in the past. The monitoring is having effect; teaching is improving, and mathematics test results rose to average in 1999.

66. Development planning for the whole school is satisfactory. Priorities are generally appropriate, although there is a need for a closer look at the structure of the curriculum, and this will be essential when the latest changes to the National Curriculum begin to take effect in September 2000. At present, the time allowed for English is high in Key Stage 3, although teachers' assessments and test results show that pupils' achievement is above average in English, particularly in reading.

67. The school development plan is clearly set out with helpful distinctions between long and short term targets, and a succinct evaluation of the previous plan. Departmental plans are successfully integrated into the whole school plans and look ahead to the next two years. The budget is closely linked to the development plan. Developments, such as spending on computers, are planned well.

68. At the time of the inspection the headteacher was teaching for almost half the week. This is an unusually high teaching load and does not make the most efficient use of the senior manager's time. The deputy head has a slightly lower load, partly to enable him to manage and improve the use of computers in the school. This sometimes leads to the deputy carrying out essential technical work, and this, too, is not an efficient use of a senior manager's time. The special educational needs coordinator spends much of his time in lessons, providing valuable help and advice to pupils and teachers in those classes. However, this leaves too little time for improving the quality of individual education plans and showing teachers how they should be used.

69. The school looks for value for money appropriately when buying equipment or services, and senior managers, with the support of the bursar, manage spending well. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value more widely. For example, two years ago, the school carried out a useful survey of parents to find out their views on their children's education, and the results influenced subsequent planning.

70. Day-to-day finances are well managed and control of spending is good. There has

not been a financial audit since the previous inspection.

71. The school is well staffed and almost all lessons are now taught by subject specialists. There is more effective use of specialist teachers than at the time of the previous inspection and this has helped to raise standards in teaching. Newly qualified teachers are well supported and there is a good induction programme for teachers new to the school. Available money is spent wisely, with a good balance between training based in the school and external training courses for whole school issues such as bullying and citizenship.

72. Support staff in all areas of the school are efficient. The school spends more than average on clerical staff, but this is efficient because they relieve teaching staff of routine jobs, such as photocopying. The school makes effective use of information and communication technology for administration, applying up-to-date computer programmes efficiently.

73. Accommodation is good and used efficiently. The buildings are sound and well maintained and there is no graffiti. There are enough classrooms and facilities for practical subjects and physical education. The library is well situated in the centre of the school and the computer areas are easily accessible. There are extensive high quality displays of pupils' work, mainly from design and technology, art and the humanities departments. Outdoor facilities are very good. The playing fields, landscaping, gardens and wildlife areas all help to make the environment as attractive as possible, and have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and learning.

74. Most subject areas have sufficient learning resources of good quality to teach the curriculum. This makes a positive contribution to the quality of education provided. The school has raised the proportion of funds allocated to resources in the current year to meet the national average. There are shortfalls in mathematics, where the text book stock is low and in music, where some of the keyboards and tuned percussion instruments need replacing. Resources are used well in most areas, but there is some inefficiency in the use of computers.

75. Facilities for information and communication technology need improving in:

- science, where the data-logging equipment is inadequate;
- geography, where the 'Weather Reporter' is not working accurately
- art, geography, history and design and technology, where teachers need to extend the range of activities that use computers.

76. The physical education department has benefited from funds from the Parent and Teacher Association for trampettes, which are well used by the pupils. The school library has a wide range of books, both fiction and non-fiction and library staff are always available during the day so that pupils can reach the texts they need. The school stock of CD-ROMs needs improving as many of the current discs are unsuitable for the age range of the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to improve standards further the governors and management should:

- (1) Raise attainment in information and communication technology by:
 - ensuring that all pupils receive their entitlement to the full programme of study, either through separate lessons or through other subjects of the curriculum;
(Paragraphs: 25, 43, 55, 97, 101, 115, 137, 141)
 - identifying areas of the information and communication technology curriculum that are not currently being taught and assessing and recording each pupil's progress in the individual elements of the programme of study.
(Paragraphs: 22, 45, 64, 99, 140)
- (2) Improve the structure of the curriculum by amending the balance of time between subjects, to bring the school closer into line with the national pattern and raise attainment in subjects, including history, geography French and physical education, where learning in lessons is good, but achievement overall is satisfactory because too little time is spent on the subject.
(Paragraphs: 12, 42, 66, 81, 90, 143, 145, 149)
- (3) Improve the attainment of pupils with special educational needs by:
 - ensuring that individual education plans contain clear, achievable and measurable targets for which pupils may aim, so that their progress towards these targets may be effectively recorded
(Paragraphs: 29, 44, 86, 108, 127, 133, 169)
 - Using the time of the special needs coordinator more efficiently to work alongside a number of teachers, rather than spending so much time supporting pupils in a narrow range of lessons.
(Paragraph: 68)
- (4) Improve the quality of classroom organisation and management of pupils in those lessons where a few pupils disturb others, by establishing a well-understood system of sanctions, so that all pupils recognise the consequences of their actions.
(Paragraphs: 13, 28, 56, 100, 160)

In addition to the above key issues, the school should consider the following other lesser weaknesses for inclusion in its action plan:

- Make better use of information from assessments to tell pupils how they are doing and help them to set targets for improvement. (Paragraphs: 52, 55, 64, 90, 101, 107, 109, 113, 129, 135, 169)
- Improve the timing of the school day, so that lessons are a more suitable length for all subjects. (Paragraph: 99)
- Improve the quality of reports to parents so that they include more information about children's progress in all subjects. (Paragraph: 59)
- Improve the quality of form assemblies so that the school complies fully with the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship. (Paragraph: 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	18	47	29	4	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	274
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	28

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	70

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.3	School data	0.2
National comparative data	6.0	National comparative data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	34	38	72

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	22	28
	Girls	32	24	32
	Total	57	46	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (94)	64 (62)	83 (88)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	25	27
	Girls	32	29	27
	Total	60	54	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (69)	75 (80)	75 (89)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	
White	268
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	16	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	82.8
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Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	21
Key Stage 3	19.9

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	623 397
Total expenditure	633 354
Expenditure per pupil	2 295
Balance brought forward from previous year	20 368
Balance carried forward to next year	10 411

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	236
Number of questionnaires returned	76

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	51	9	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	26	67	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	58	11	5	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	54	20	8	1
The teaching is good.	26	67	5	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	54	14	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	43	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	39	1	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	58	16	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	37	50	5	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	59	3	7	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	50	7	3	1

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

78. Standards in English have improved since the school's previous inspection. In 1999, National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2 were above average, both when compared with national figures, and when compared with the results of similar schools. Improvement in these results over the last four years shows a rising trend, markedly better than the national rate. Boys, especially, have done well in comparison with boys nationally. This good standard is maintained in pupils' work in Key Stage 3, so that when they leave the school at the end of Year 8, most pupils are above the standard expected for their age.

79. During the inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was seen to be in line with national expectations. Attainment towards the end of Year 8 was above average. Many eleven year olds discuss important questions, such as environmental issues, cogently and persuasively. They listen to one another and refute or develop arguments. This discussion leads to effective writing in a variety of styles and formats, including brochures, letters, essays and poems, as well as play scripts and stories. The combination of purposeful discussion, followed by written work, continues in Key Stage 3. By the time they leave the school, many pupils write well, particularly when writing long pieces of work such as stories. They adapt their style well for different purposes and readers. Pupils' work includes, for instance, books for young children, stories for their own age group, formal letters, evocative poetry, descriptive prose, and maturely expressed essays.

80. There is a good and effective strategy for improving pupils' literacy. A higher than average proportion of time has been allocated to teaching English and drama, with approaches derived from the National Literacy Strategy. This time is well used, except that part of the time given to promoting reading in Key Stage 3 is not so purposeful or effective, because pupils' reading is already above average by this age.

81. In Year 5, pupils' attainment in speaking, listening, reading and writing is as expected for their age. A higher than average proportion of the present Year 5 entered the school with a reading age above their chronological age. However, a minority of pupils have difficulties in reading and writing when they come to the school.

82. Pupils' achievements, in relation to what they already know and can do, are at least as good as expected. They are learning to edit their written work effectively when producing a polished version. However, throughout both key stages, work in progress shows many common errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation. When asked, pupils often see and correct these for themselves, but some errors persist into final versions, including those which have been word-processed. Work on display and in pupils' folders shows that pupils are developing effective computer skills.

83. In lessons, including drama, pupils are developing satisfactory speaking and listening skills through whole-class and group discussions. Opportunities for higher levels of attainment through more sustained, formal speech are evident in the subject planning.

84. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read aloud at least as well expected for their age and a minority read very well, with expression and clarity. Test results at the end of Year 6 show that standards in reading have been above average for the last two years. Pupils understand and remember what they read, and discuss plots and characters with understanding – including some work on 'Macbeth', for instance. By the time they are in

Year 6, they know how to use the library effectively, and some have developed the capacity to scan for information and note down the points they want to remember. Some pupils make mature choices for their personal reading, and show a good knowledge of books in different genres and by different authors.

85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and good in Key Stage 3. One out of the ten lessons seen during the inspection was unsatisfactory. The rest were all at least satisfactory, and most of the Key Stage 3 lessons were well or very well taught. A good level of expertise in teaching English and drama was evident in the best lessons seen. In these lessons, pupils learn well because they are expected to respond with maturity of behaviour, thought and speech, and are motivated to do so. Where pupils are grouped by attainment, the teacher helps them to learn by modifying the work to some extent to suit the various needs of the pupils. For instance, in a group reading session, the teacher gave support where it was most needed and adapted questions for the lower and higher attaining pupils, so that all made good progress. In a particularly effective lesson, the teacher aroused pupils' curiosity about the differences between myths, fables and legends, evoking much intellectual effort from the class. In most lessons, pupils are given individual advice on how to improve their work. Much of pupils' written work is effectively corrected, with comments which both evaluate the effort the pupil has made and set clear targets for higher attainment.

86. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because, from Year 6 onwards, most are in small groups where the teacher can give them extra time and help. Teachers do not have copies of individual education plans with specific targets, but they know pupils well and keep a note of their particular needs. There is a need for specific learning targets, to be met through English lessons.

87. In most lessons, pupils are keen, and willing to work. Generally, pupils are attentive, and in drama, for instance, Year 5 pupils were sensible, self-disciplined and mature in their response. In all years, most pupils get down to the set tasks, including sustained writing, in a business-like manner, if not always with enthusiasm. Some of their work shows that they have thought and felt deeply, and have made use of their communication skills and their imaginations to express themselves effectively. However, when teaching is not so effective, a small minority of pupils respond badly by being talkative and restless and so making matters worse. These problems tend to arise where teachers and pupils do not know one another very well.

88. In speaking and writing in various subjects across the curriculum, pupils are taught to use specialised vocabulary, such as the names of muscles in physical education, and to use dictionaries, for instance in religious education. In history lessons, pupils' writing skills are well used in empathic writing. Sometimes, frameworks that suggest ways to organise their writing are used to help pupils of all abilities to record what they have learnt. Opportunities for non-fiction reading and research in other subjects are not always used as much as they might be, although pupils are taught to make use of the school library and are encouraged to do so for homework and private study. Spelling errors are usually corrected, wherever they occur, although some persist into finished work. Most pupils read and write sufficiently well to meet their learning needs, and those who can not, receive effective remedial teaching and some support in the classroom.

89. The subject is well managed, and the requirements of the national strategy to improve literacy have been fully and successfully integrated into the teaching scheme. The subject coordinator takes the opportunity to observe colleagues when possible. There is some team-teaching, when colleagues have the opportunity to share ideas and skills.

90. Following its previous inspection, the school has replaced many books and has improved the timetabling of English lessons. However, the subject takes up a generous amount of time and in Key Stage 3 the time allowed for reading is not essential for most pupils. Teachers have given a higher proportion of time and attention to writing. Pupils are grouped according to their attainment in Years 6, 7 and 8, and this enables them to make the best of their different abilities. Drama lessons also continue to help pupils improve their speaking and listening skills.

MATHEMATICS

91. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Satisfactory progress has been made on many of the issues raised in the previous inspection report. Those needing further work are related to the management of the department.

92. The standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, are close to national averages), and at the end of Year 8, standards are in line with national expectations. Results in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests have improved over the last three years and the 1999 results are in line with national averages. They are also in line with averages for similar schools. The school's 1999 results show a large increase in the proportion of pupils reaching level 5. Assessment by teachers was higher than the test result for the proportion reaching level 4. However this difference is due to a small number of pupils failing by 1 or 2 marks to reach level 4 in the test.

93. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils calculate volumes of solids and measure acute, obtuse and reflex angles. They identify equal angles in diagrams containing parallel lines. Average and higher attainers solve simple linear equations. Average attainers calculate angles in polygons and use co-ordinates to plot points. Lower attainers identify lines of symmetry, calculate the probability of given events happening, and round numbers to the nearest ten.

94. By the end of Year 8, higher attaining pupils interpret and draw pie charts, calculating the angles to represent collected data. They use percentages to work out given problems and have a good grasp of number. Average attainers measure and draw angles accurately and use fractions in calculations. Lower attainers draw bar charts or straight-line graphs, correctly labelling the axes; they calculate areas of rectangles and recognise simple equivalent fractions.

95. Throughout the school standards are average, and sometimes above average in number, shape, space and measure, and handling data. Pupils are less good at explaining and writing about methods of solving problems. A contributory factor to this weakness is a reliance on using, and recording answers on, worksheets. This is partly due to a shortage of textbooks. Higher attainers do not have enough opportunities to develop and use their algebraic skills in harder questions. Pupils handle number and measurement effectively in other subjects such as science and geography where necessary.

96. The amount of individual monitoring and support given to pupils throughout the school helps them to make satisfactory progress. There are no significant differences in standards reached according to gender or ethnic background, and pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in their classes. Pupils are grouped in sets according to attainment throughout the school, and this helps teachers to provide tasks and activities suitable for different groups. Teachers feel that the improvement in achievement in Key Stage 2, as shown through improved test results, is due to the introduction of setting in Years 5 and 6.

97. Departmental plans refer briefly to information and communication technology tasks for each year group. A small sample of such work showed that pupils interrogate databases and represent data graphically. However, there is not enough evidence to show the extent of most pupils' information and communication technology skills, or how often they are given opportunities to use them in mathematics.

98. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In about a third of lessons seen teaching was good; it was unsatisfactory in one lesson, out of 11 observed, and satisfactory in the rest.

99. Teachers know their subject well and explain it simply, helping pupils to learn by breaking explanations down into suitably short steps. Pupils are taught, and expected to use, correct mathematical terminology from the beginning. For example higher attainers in Year 6 could define inverse operations. Skills in mental arithmetic are taught using a number of methods designed to improve recall and increase speed of response, including mental "warm-up" sessions and regular practice of numeracy skills on Fridays. When teaching is satisfactory but not good, the plenary session at the end of a lesson, reviewing and consolidating the topics for that day, is not as good as the initial part of the lesson. A factor in this is the length, forty minutes, of single lessons; some staff found it difficult to give sufficient time to reviewing the lesson. Double lessons in Key Stage 2 make it difficult for some teachers to keep pupils' interest and attention for the whole time. This results in a slower rate of progress for some pupils in a group.

100. When teaching is good, learning is good because effective planning provides a clear framework for the lesson, and imaginative strategies are used to enthuse pupils with a love of mathematics. This is shown by their eagerness to take part in question and answer activities, by their hard work and by a pride in producing good written work. Questioning also makes pupils think about why they are tackling problems a certain way. This deepens their understanding, as well as extending their knowledge and skills. In most lessons teachers establish clearly understood routines which lead to an orderly and pleasant working environment. However, on a few occasions, teachers have to work harder than they should have to, to keep all pupils working and learning. This is due to a small group of pupils not listening and not wanting to work. In most cases teachers succeed in making them work but at the expense of slowing the pace of the lesson. Occasionally, a few pupils persist in distracting others, and the inability to deal with this results in unsatisfactory teaching and learning. All teachers use homework well to help pupils progress by reinforcing and reviewing topics learnt in class.

101. Since Christmas there has been no head of department. A new appointment has been made to start next term. The temporary arrangements for the co-ordination of mathematics, using a team leader for each year, are working well. However these staff are not in a position to tackle longer-term issues such as improving the monitoring of teaching. This was also identified as a need in the last report. Existing curriculum planning, including the use of information and communication technology, is very sketchy and does not make enough use of information from assessment to make sure all pupils are given work that

matches their attainment. Since the last inspection standards have improved, as shown by the 1999 Key Stage 2 test results. This improved progress is now apparent in Year 7. The gap between the work of the current Year 7, and the work of the current Year 8 when in Year 7, is now less than a year, showing the rate of progress is improving.

SCIENCE

102. In 1999 the results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were in line with the national average and have risen steadily at a faster rate than the national trend over the past three years. The results are now in line with those of pupils in similar schools. Teachers' assessments closely reflected the average test results but under-assessed the performance of higher attaining pupils due to weaknesses in the moderation procedures.

103. From the work and lessons seen, the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national averages. By the end of the key stage, pupils have gained a good knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. They describe properties of different materials and explain how to classify them. They know what sound is and explain how it travels. Although they carry out simple investigations, they have more limited skills in experimental science, especially in making predictions and drawing conclusions based on their scientific knowledge and understanding. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

104. The overall attainment of pupils when they leave at the end of Year 8 is in line with expectations. By the end of Year 8, pupils describe the main organs of the human body, such as the digestive tract, and say why they are important. They know about some basic chemical reactions, such as neutralisation, and use this knowledge to conduct an investigation into antacid tablets. They know about the pitch and volume of sound and explain how these can be changed. Their investigation skills have improved in quality and depth but they are still not good at using their scientific knowledge to make predictions and draw conclusions. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

105. Pupils are able to do simple calculations and plot line graphs. Although they are good at using scientific terms and read well, their spelling and presentation of written work is, at times, unsatisfactory. The provision for pupils to use information and communication technology in science is poor. They use word-processing skills to write short reports and use a database, for example, to find out about the planets, but they have not gained the expected skills in data logging and control.

106. The overall quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is satisfactory. On occasions it is very good. Particular strengths are teachers' knowledge and understanding, their expectations of pupils, their management of classes and the way they use everyday examples to help pupils learn. There has been a considerable improvement since the last inspection in the amount of practical work that pupils are able to do. In a lesson on sound that started with a small drum and a few grains of rice, pupils were given a good opportunity to find out what sound is and how it travels. Doing their own practical investigation greatly helped them to make good progress and improved their understanding about the way in which sound travels. In an investigation into acid indigestion the teacher made very good use of questions to help pupils develop their ideas. Pupils gained a very good understanding of what was expected of them and the quality of the planning and doing of their investigation was very good.

107. Teachers do not do enough to help pupils make better progress in gaining skills in science investigation. Too much lesson planning is unsatisfactory because it does not

clearly say what pupils of different abilities should do; as a result, marking and assessment of pupils' day-to-day progress is weak and is not used to set the next targets for learning. Also, few pupils have a clear view of how well they are getting on, or of what they need to do to get on better. Below average pupils, and those with special educational needs, make steady progress. The lack of individual education plans with clear learning targets prevents them from doing even better.

108. The use made of information in individual education plans is unsatisfactory and hinders the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers look at the plans that are held by the special educational needs coordinator, but these do not tell teachers how to help pupils reach their targets through their science lessons. When teachers clearly tell pupils what they should be doing and set them practical tasks to do, they respond well, work well together and make good progress. In an investigation into the properties of waterproof materials, this approach and the use of everyday items and good questioning helped pupils to gain a good understanding of the importance of lightness and flexibility, as well as waterproofing, in deciding on the best materials to use. This could have been a very successful lesson had the teacher not dominated the discussion for so long, rather than giving pupils the chance to develop their own ideas in small group work.

109. The recently appointed science coordinator, with the help of the school's senior managers, has made a sound start to improving provision in science. Good progress has been made in responding to the key issues raised in the last inspection. The scheme of work has been greatly improved with clear learning targets for pupils of different abilities. However, this is not yet reflected in lesson plans and on-going assessments. All staff teaching science are now specialists and none of the teaching is now less than satisfactory. Some improvement has been made in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning but this information is not yet being used to identify teachers' needs for professional development.

110. Although the arrangements for end-of-term and end-of-unit assessments are now much better, the use of day-to-day assessment is still unsatisfactory, as is the usefulness of much of the marking. Apart from successfully promoting group working and some aspects of environmental awareness, not enough attention is paid to ways in which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development might be increased through science. The department has access to a good range of high quality books, resources and equipment. However, there are some deficiencies in equipment for electrical work and, more seriously, in the provision for environmental sensing, data logging and control.

ART

111. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with expectations. Most pupils record what they have experienced and imagined satisfactorily. They show increasing control over a range of materials, tools and techniques. They evaluate their own and others' work in the light of what was intended. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Most pupils know and understand how to make simple coiled pots and pinched pots, and fantasy masks and can do so. They make interesting collograph plates and print satisfactory designs from them. Observational drawings of variable quality of, for example, chess pieces, faces, or ideas for embossed designs are present in sketch books. The best of the work is exhibited in attractive displays around the school.

112. The overall attainment of pupils when they leave at the end of Year 8 is in line with expected standards. Observational drawing and modelling in three dimensions are of a

satisfactory standard. Pupils compare images and artefacts using an art, craft and design vocabulary satisfactorily, for example the idea of abstraction in two and three dimensions, and some of the work of Kandinsky and Henry Moore. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

113. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is sound overall. It is good in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 2 pupils are taught by four different teachers, three of whom are non-specialists in art and two of whom are newly qualified teachers. At Key Stage 3, the subject coordinator provides sound leadership and a clear direction for the subject. In Key Stage 2, teachers' knowledge and skills are adequate and expectations are appropriate but lesson plans and the way pupils are managed are variable, particularly in the case of newly qualified teachers who need further support. In the lessons that are satisfactory overall but have minor weaknesses, lessons, the lesson content is sometimes too much for the time available. There are good procedures for the assessment of pupils' work but these are not applied consistently, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. Thus, although leadership and management of the subject may be described as generally satisfactory, the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching in the subject is unsatisfactory.

114. Pupils' learning at Key Stage 2 and 3 is good and attitudes and behaviour are mostly good. High, average and low attaining pupils acquire their knowledge, skills and understanding better than expected and all, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress. For example, pupils in Year 7 made large drawings of sections of fruit using charcoal, chalk and coloured paper. Although some pupils worked more slowly, all produced well-observed drawings and two very able pupils made outstanding images. All pupils made good progress in developing their observational drawing skills and completing the task within the time available. Two of the lessons observed took place in non-specialist rooms and although these were in fact successful lessons, it is not difficult to envisage circumstances in which the accommodation would limit what can be done and therefore have a negative impact on learning and progress.

115. In the previous report art was a key issue and the school was required to ensure 'that there is a coherent programme to teach National Curriculum art'. This has been achieved and is a major improvement since the last inspection. Developing the use of information and communication technology in art which was another recommendation has taken place to some extent, for example pupils have used the 'paintbrush' application and flatbed scanner, but it is as yet not a strong feature.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. The attainment of pupils in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national expectation. Pupils enter school with various experiences in handling resistant and compliant materials. Most pupils in Year 5 have made models in recycled media, done simple stitches and basic baking, but few have experienced cutting and shaping hard materials or working with power tools. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress and gain good skills in using a range of tools and materials and produce items such as hand-held puzzles, tablemats, visors, tower structures and milky drinks. Most pupils' files contain a good amount of basic theory, well thought out design sheets and some practical samples. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 made card models of wheels and cogs prior to constructing a roundabout, which increased their understanding of gears and speed of rotation. Most pupils understand the terms used in lessons and are developing good language skills. Pupils understand that putting ideas on paper are good first stages in designing. Drawing skills are variable, but most pupils' drawings are recognisable and all explain what they intend making.

117. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 8 is above expectation. Pupils build on to their experiences and design and make more complex items during Years 7 and 8. They produce acrylic racks, electronic games, textile containers, softwood boxes and main meal dishes to illustrate healthy eating. Preparation skills are good. Most pupils draw neatly and annotate their drawings clearly, showing some individuality. Pupils research well and know how to construct a questionnaire about, for instance, eating habits. They take care with marking and measuring before cutting and shaping which helps to build in success at the later stages of construction. Practical skills in using both power and hand tools are good.

118. Pupils are confident and careful workers. They use information technology well to create base plates and for exterior surfaces of packages, showing skill in using words and screen art. Self-assessment is a strong feature. Pupils are used to appraising their work and do so honestly, stating clearly where it might be improved. During the inspection, pupils in Year 8 gave short statements to the rest of the class about their ideas for making learning games for children with disabilities. After deliberation they were in turn questioned by the others about feasibility, showing understanding of the problem and sound logic. There is little difference in attainment of boys or girls; sometimes girls settle to practical work quicker than the boys, but boys sort out problems in theory more rapidly.

119. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in a quarter of lessons and good in the remainder. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are effective demonstrators, which ensures pupils are taught the correct facts, terms and skills. Language used is at a high level. Questioning is very good. Teachers extend pupils' answers to make pupils think hard, find out if they have grasped new work and that they understand it. Planning follows the department outline and lessons usually proceed as planned because overall control is effective and all pupils work without interruptions. The work is broken into short modules. These give pupils experiences with a range of media and are timed so that pupils can finish their practical work and maintain an interest in it. Pupils show good attitudes to the subject. They like practical work, try hard and are proud of their results. They appreciate having something to take home at regular intervals. There is a good balance of theory, making samples, designing and making final artefacts. This scheme benefits pupils as they understand what they are doing, gives them scope for personal expression, practice with the materials and the skills to produce something of quality.

120. Expectations are very high. Teachers insist on good standards of finish from pupils of all abilities. During lessons pupils get individual help and encouragement which is especially important for pupils with special educational needs and those who lack self confidence. Although the theory work sheets are generally well created, the wording on them is inadequately pitched for the differing abilities of the pupils in the class. Pupils with low literacy skills need a better range of theory materials so they can achieve appropriate standards pitched at their own levels. For this reason, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress rather than the good progress made by average and higher attainers. Marking is good. Class and homework are graded and commented upon. This tells pupils how they are doing and how to improve.

121. Leadership is good and the department works well as a team. The teaching scheme follows the requirements of the National Curriculum and contributes well to pupils' intellectual and personal development. The curriculum, which is constantly reviewed and altered, is broadened by the inclusion of some elements of information technology, control technology and electronics.

122. The department has made a good response to the comments made in the last inspection report. Standards in both designing and making in all material areas are higher at both key stages and the scheme of work has been improved and extended to comply with regulations. There is a new head of department whose development plan is good and the intentions therein are being realised. The quality of teaching is now good and the previous criticisms of poor planning and low expectations have been overcome. Resources still need improving, especially for consumable materials. The workshop remains small and the food room badly needs re-planning and refitting.

GEOGRAPHY

123. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with expectations for pupils of their age. By the end of the key stage they use maps, diagrams, symbols, graphs and statistical tables confidently, both in searching for information and in demonstrating what they know. These skills make a significant contribution to numeracy. They explain how natural characteristics and weather shape the work and lives of people, in studies of such communities as Princetown on Dartmoor.

124. The overall attainment of pupils when they leave at the end of Year 8 is in line with expectations. By the end of Year 8 pupils know how world temperature zones, the behaviour of rivers and seas and seismic activity continue to affect the planet. They explain that development of countries and regions can create both wealth and poverty and show this very clearly by tabulating statistics about population distribution, income and economic activity in Brazil. In extended writing pupils make judgements about the quality of life and survival chances of people who have little control of their lives. There are insufficient opportunities for the use of computers at both key stages, especially for logging and manipulation of data which are essential tools in geography.

125. Pupils get to know their local area and use questionnaires to find out how people react to change by visiting supermarkets in Bury St. Edmunds. In writing about their findings they consider ways in which out-of-town shopping affects people differently and can sometimes cause conflict. Most pupils organise survey results and draw conclusions but there are too few opportunities for pupils to talk at length and become familiar with using geographical terms. The increase in fieldwork is a positive response to the previous inspection.

126. Pupils learn well because lessons have a sense of purpose. Pace is brisk so that those who will not choose geography after Key Stage 3 have well-established skills and sufficient local and global knowledge and curiosity. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and now it is mostly good and at times, very good, when pupils have opportunities to be independent and make decisions about finding information and how to present it. Teachers are conscious of the need to maintain pupils' confidence in coping with maps and reinforce these skills in a variety of ways so that they underpin all learning. For example, Year 5 pupils built up a profile of Princetown on Dartmoor by matching key symbols to landscape features on their Ordnance Survey maps and realised they could speculate about the type of economic activity that might be possible.

127. Teachers find opportunities to make lessons come alive through inviting visitors into school. Year 6 pupils' studies of St Lucia are made exciting and thought-provoking when they have a carnival day. They prepare dances and listen to a steel band. A stallholder from the local market demonstrates the costs of growing, packing, transport, and so on, of a banana by cutting it into portions. The more technical skills of geography are sometimes taught outside of a context which would give them meaning. Teachers generally design work to allow higher attaining pupils to do extra research and they are always sensitive to the needs of individuals who may struggle. But there is not enough work specifically targeted to the needs of pupils at each end of the ability range so that they can use a different route and become more independent. The lack of clear individual education plans for pupils on the special need register means that teachers have insufficient guidance as to what they need to do to help them meet their targets. Good practice in marking exists but it is inconsistent overall and pupils are not aware of what they might do to improve.

128. Pupils in lessons are keen to be involved in their learning and are quick to begin tasks. By producing a tourist brochure for the Lake District while learning about National Parks, Year 7 pupils understand why the protection of natural features and the development of new ways of gaining a livelihood can sometimes be opposed. There is an excited buzz in the class when they are discovering knowledge for themselves. After accessing the computer for their Lake District brochures, a group of Year 7 girls could see that they had more than enough information and proposed to create a file of information for others to use in the future.

129. Changes in leadership and staffing in the department have resulted in schemes of work where teaching strategies and pupils' activities lack detail, and are not immediately matched to National Curriculum levels, and therefore give inadequate support to colleagues. Newly qualified teachers are well supported in their day-to-day work. There is no year-on-year monitoring of pupils' attainment where trends could be analysed, targets set and action taken to maintain or improve standards. Lack of a regular formal opportunity to discuss these and other issues, works against building stimulating professional relationships and establishing practices which would make the most of the considerable expertise and enthusiasm in the department. Steps already taken should bring a period of stability.

HISTORY

130. The attainment of pupils in history at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with expectations for pupils of their age. By the end of the key stage pupils weave into their writing, fact and imagination to recreate and express opinions about aspects of life from the times of the Ancient Egyptians, Aztecs, Tudor monarchs and Queen Victoria's reign. They understand how religion, technology and the use of power stimulate change, bringing glory and suffering. They know how to recognise the marks of the past through work in class and in the field, searching a range of sources of evidence including archaeology. Throughout both key stages they use dates and order events confidently. This contribution to numeracy is reinforced by frequent use of statistics and presentation of data in graphs, pie charts and tables often requiring the translation of raw data into percentages of 360 degrees. For example, as part of their study of Victorian life, Year 6 pupils learn to question primary evidence when they categorise data from a Suffolk workhouse and find contradictions when they compare it with data about people living in the village.

131. Pupils' overall attainment when they leave at the end of Year 8 is in line with average levels though some pupils at each end of the ability range do better than expected. By the end of Year 8, pupils weigh evidence from a range of sources to make

judgements about democracy and the struggle for freedom in Britain during the 17th 18th and 20th centuries, in the American colonies and by North American Indians. They study the culture, beliefs, customs and significant events of Roman and Medieval times. By writing as a journalist in Boston at the time of the riots, or as an official at the War Office during World War 1 informing a soldier's family of his death, or by writing a letter as a soldier at the Front, pupils redraft information into a form with a specific purpose. They are developing literacy skills and learning to recognise bias. Their ability to scan texts and take notes is developed well at this stage.

132. Teaching and learning are good and, on occasions very good because teachers know their subject and mostly succeed in bringing characters and events in history off the page by adding colour through music, literature, dance and drama. For example, Year 6 pupils dress up in Victorian costume and travel to the Colne Valley Railway where they become 19th century schoolchildren, perform a music hall song and travel on the train to meet 'Queen Victoria' and 'Prince Albert'. Such simulations contrast strongly with the work on children in factories when pupils collect evidence from a range of sources including a doctor's report and eyewitness accounts before writing an Inspector's Report. Teaching in this way makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The use of computers is integral to the course and makes a good contribution to literacy and enquiry work. An increasing range of CD-ROMs, Data 100, the Hardwick web and materials from the Internet allow pupils to search for, and synthesise, appropriate information. But opportunities now need to be provided for pupils to practise the range of information and communication technology skills required by National Curriculum.

133. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress when there is support in class from other adults and because teachers know them well, although individual education plans are not used to help pupils reach their targets. There is some impressive research leading to extended writing by higher attaining pupils, but at each end of the ability range pupils need tasks of a different type as well as at different levels. Teachers mark work frequently and give pupils positive encouragement by saying what they have done well. However, comments do tell pupils how to improve skills that are specific to history.

134. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are quickly engaged on the task in hand. They listen well and like to talk about what they know and are proud to explain what they are doing.

135. Leadership is good. Teaching schemes are thorough with topics, resources and teaching strategies very closely linked to skills and National Curriculum requirements. Newly qualified teachers are well supported. A portfolio of pupils' work is kept so that teachers have exemplars of National Curriculum levels. But there is no monitoring of standards through analysis of attainment to note overall trends and set targets. Opportunities for regular professional discussion and sharing practice are essential to maintain the vitality of the course and its teachers. There has been a positive response to the previous inspection report.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

136. The attainment of pupils in information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 2 is below the national average in most applications, with the exception of word processing. Computer knowledge on entry to the school is variable. In their primary schools most pupils use computers of different types and with a range of programs. Most pupils work with quizzes to do simple mathematics and shape games, some write words and

others know how to draw pictures on the screen. In Year 5, pupils quickly learn how to use the new computers and their basic skills are generally satisfactory by the end of the year. Pupils find the programs, seek information from compact discs, they know how to move the mouse and click and double click to move themselves on. Most pupils save their work with the minimum of assistance, retrieve it successfully and print it.

137. Pupils use the word processing programs to write accounts in subject areas such as English, science, religious education, history and geography, although in some they appear not to utilise spell-checkers. Word processing skills are generally in line with national expectations. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have mastered how to present text to make it more attractive to the reader. They insert pictures on to their pages, add borders, change style, size, emphasis and colour of text and some make columns for newspaper type reports. The good progress pupils make in Year 5 wanes towards the end of Year 6 as pupils have fewer opportunities to keep up the skills learned. Achievement overall by the end of the key stage is unsatisfactory as pupils do not have enough time to work with databases, spreadsheets, computer art, graph programs, data monitoring or computer control.

138. The overall attainment of pupils when they leave at the end of Year 8 is below the national average. Pupils have too few opportunities to use the computers across the curriculum. They are not receiving their entitlement to the subject and they are relatively unskilled in most operations except using compact discs, word processing and looking at databases. They have insufficient knowledge of spreadsheets, how to collect and enter data, interrogate a database, or undertake alpha or numeric sorting. They access clip art but few show skill in creating their own images. They do not use digital cameras, scanners or data-logging equipment to a sufficient depth and they have only limited knowledge of the Internet. Basic skills such as calling up programs, handling the mouse, saving and printing are satisfactory for their age. Word processing skills are sound, but should be much higher as pupils' results of English tests are above the national average and higher than those in schools of similar type.

139. The quality of teaching in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. The computers are not used often enough. During the inspection, many computers were on, but lying idle for long periods. Pupils in Year 5 have one formal lesson in information and communication technology per week throughout the year, but pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 are expected to learn information and communication technology across the curriculum. During the inspection only one lesson was observed and judgements concerning standards are made from looking at finished pieces of work, pupils' files and observing small groups of pupils working largely unaided in the computer suites. Where pupils are taught formally, the quality of teaching is good. The teachers prepare for individual lessons well, show the pupils what to do, give correct information and allow pupils time to practice the skills. Pupils gain from the formal teaching as they get help at each stage and do not waste time on trial and error methods.

140. The weaknesses in teaching stem from the scheme of work that fails to give pupils adequate skills in all the areas of the subject from the beginning of Year 5 to the end of Year 8. Pupils are keen to get to the computers and enjoy trying to be productive. They behave well, even when away from the class teachers and treat the machines carefully. Teachers allow pupils to go to the computers during lessons but most fail to check what the pupils are doing. The work is not assessed against national levels, so many pupils underperform even though they do what is asked of them. Many pupils waste time remembering simple operations before they begin and produce little work of quality by the end of the session. There is insufficient evidence in pupils' files to prove their skill levels across all

operations and there are no portfolios of assessed work. Pupils' work is marked and commented upon, but too many comments are congratulatory and fail to inform pupils how their work should be improved.

141. The effectiveness of information and communication technology in other subjects is very variable. Most department documents state where information and communication technology should be linked to the subject, but not all intentions are realised. The departments of design and technology, geography, history and English often use the facilities effectively to give pupils practice in handling words and looking at data. Departments such as science and mathematics do not now teach the necessary skills in using control logo, spreadsheets or use of data-logging equipment. Other subjects such as religious education, music, art and modern foreign languages are making efforts to give pupils some help in using compact discs, keyboards and art programs, but on an irregular basis. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages as they have a reasonable range of learning support programs that are tailored to their abilities and interests.

142. The school has made some response to the criticisms in the previous inspection report. The resources have improved and there are now three computer suites fitted with up-to-date equipment. Pupils remain well motivated towards information and communication technology and their basic skills are sound. Attainment is lower than it should be at both key stages. Some aspects of management are unsatisfactory. The new department leader has clear vision for future developments, but has not yet fulfilled the stated aims for staff training and the monitoring of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The scheme of work does not fully cover the requirements of the National Curriculum, or continue through the school after Year 5, so it results in low attainment for the majority of pupils. There has not been an audit to discover what computer equipment pupils use at home, so the teachers cannot capitalise on pupils' skills and experiences. Parents now receive reports of progress in the subject, but records of attainment are thin and are not secured against the National Curriculum levels for all applications.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

143. There has been a significant improvement in French since the previous inspection; in Years 5 and 6 pupils acquire sufficient knowledge to enable them to reach at least average, and often above average, levels by the end of Year 8, although the time allowed for French in Key Stage 3 is well below that recommended.

144. In Year 5 pupils quickly learn to understand, and respond to, basic classroom language. They can count to at least 20 and most know the alphabet in French and spell their names. Pupils are able to exchange greetings and personal information with each other, fluently and with a good accent. Written work is accurate and pupils associate the sounds of French with the written form. Pupils have grasped the notion of gender. In Year 6, pupils are able to describe their physical appearance; higher-attaining pupils using up to fifteen words, and lower attaining pupils a short phrase. Most pupils understand the notion of the agreement of adjectives and apply it in their speaking and writing. Pupils are good at assimilating vocabulary. Listening skills have developed further and pupils are able to pick out football scores and dates heard on a tape. In writing, higher attainers make up their own timetables and describe their day, expressing, their likes and dislikes. Lower attainers copy sentences or match them with pictures and are able to fill in a timetable and write a short sentences saying which subjects they like.

145. In Year 7, pupils know the names of the main buildings in a town and are able to understand and give directions in dialogues of up to four exchanges. Pupils are able to conduct a survey on pets, create a graph and write a few sentences of interpretation. Grammatical knowledge is good and pupils understand and apply the present tense, negative expressions, the partitive article and common prepositions. Higher attainers write ten or more lines of correct natural French, sometimes with humour, on home and school. Attainment is at least in line with expectations for pupils of this age by the end of Year 8 but the rate of progress is slower than in Year 7. This is because too little time is allowed for the subject. Listening and speaking are good, with a number of pupils at National Curriculum Level 5. Grammatical knowledge has expanded to cover the perfect tense, and –ir and –re verbs. These have been practised competently, but insufficiently to allow pupils to incorporate them in individual writing. Higher attaining pupils write at length about school subjects and explain their likes and dislikes.

146. The teacher is well qualified and experienced and the quality of teaching is good, particularly in Key Stage 2. In all lessons, pupils acquire new knowledge and skills. Learning objectives are made clear at the beginning of the lesson and there is a review at the end so see what progress has been made. A strength of the teaching is the ability to carry the whole class, so that all feel that they are having some success and are motivated as a result. This is particularly true for the average and lower-attainers. For most activities different tasks are provided for different levels of attainment. The teacher is enthusiastic and sets high standards, she also has good relations with the pupils, who are keen, enthusiastic and hard working in their turn. The teacher makes good use of French in teaching and in classroom transactions, and this encourages the pupils to speak fluently and with confidence. Even greater demands could be made in this aspect. A variety of methods is used to motivate the pupils and improve learning; the use of flash cards and the overhead projector to communicate meaning without resorting to English; audio tapes and pair-work for listening and speaking; text books, readers and well-devised work sheets for reading and writing. All are used competently. The teacher is skilled in teaching points of grammar, so that all pupils are able to understand.

147. Work is marked regularly and, although there are few explanations of mistakes or hints for improvement, exercises are related to National Curriculum levels, so that pupils are always aware of how their work relates to national norms. This is further reinforced by very thorough assessment. Results are plotted on a grid and pupils can see the progress they are making and are motivated by it.

148. Teaching is particularly successful with pupils having special educational needs; they are fully integrated into the classes and modified work enables them make very good progress at their own level. The experience is encouraging and some pupils reach average and above average levels in particular areas. One weakness in the teaching is the detailed planning of particular lessons. The objectives and the individual activities are clear but there is insufficient discipline in the timing and not all are undertaken. This affects particularly the higher attainers, who spend too long on easier tasks and have insufficient time to tackle the more difficult, thus slowing down their progress.

149. The curriculum for French is broad and well conceived. The time allocated in Key Stage 3 is below that which is recommended nationally. The shortage is mainly compensated by the addition of time in Key Stage 2. The curriculum is enriched by the one-day visit to France and the opportunity for some to spend a week there. To compensate, partly, for inadequate access to information technology, the coordinator runs a French computer club.

MUSIC

150. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above expected standards. By the end of the key stage pupils can play pieces well from notation, and take part in good group and class performances. They have a good understanding of the musical elements which they apply effectively in composing short pieces. Pupils have a good knowledge of music from different times and make use of appropriate vocabulary to describe musical ideas. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

151. In work and lessons seen during the inspection, attainment is above expected standards. For example, Year 6 pupils create good performances of Pachelbel's Canon in groups and as a class, from notation and with good awareness of their individual contribution to the ensemble. Work in books shows good examples of graphic scores and compositions using pentatonic scales and devices such as ostinato.

152. The overall attainment of pupils when they leave at the end of Year 8 is above expectations. Pupils perform individual parts with confidence, for example, in good group performances of gamelan pieces. They show a good understanding of musical ideas and structure such as theme and variations. They use musical vocabulary appropriately. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

153. Forty nine pupils, (seventeen per cent) a good proportion, improve their musical attainment with additional instrumental lessons and they and others gain further experiences participating in extra curricular groups, such as orchestra and choir which meet regularly.

154. Since the previous inspection attainment has improved from 'in line with' to 'above expectations'. The subject also now has much improved keyboard provision, including several instruments which can be linked to computers, giving a good entitlement for all to musical information and communication technology.

155. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is very good and the good picture of attainment reflects this. Because the teacher has very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, including very good instrumental and information and communication technology skills, lessons are well planned and organised so that high, average and low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make very good progress. Pupils in each year have positive attitudes to the subject and are well behaved in music lessons. This enables very good creative effort and productivity to take place without interruptions. Year 5 pupils, for example, worked hard to create some words for a song, developing their knowledge and understanding of rhyme and metre, and the application of dynamics, timbre and texture. This lesson made a notable contribution to literacy by focussing on reading and writing words and their rhyme and metre. Pupils maintained a high level of interest and enjoyment within the requirements so skilfully put in place by the teacher.

156. The subject is well led and managed. Schemes of work and arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress are very good. Imaginative use is made of the good accommodation by having a practical area for keyboard and ensemble work, free of clutter at one end, and at the other convenient tables and chairs for writing or playing tuned percussion instruments. The criticisms in the last report have been addressed and no longer apply, save one, the poor state of the tuned percussion instruments. Good use was made of these in the gamelan activity referred to, but the state of disrepair of some of the instruments was a hindrance to effective playing for some pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

157. When the school was last inspected, pupils' attainment in physical education was described as being broadly as expected for their age. This is still generally true, but there is also some very high attainment in gymnastics at the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils are in Year 6. Some individuals in both key stages have particular talents in games and athletics, and are valued and encouraged by the school. There is no evidence of pupils underachieving in physical education. Pupils with special educational needs, including with some temporary difficulties, participate and often achieve well.

158. In the lessons and club activities that were seen, nearly every pupil was able to achieve a level of physical activity at least typical for his or her age. In Key Stage 3, pupils bounce, throw and catch heavy basketballs and netballs quite accurately and continuously. Working indoors, they make good use of limited space, dodging, running and stopping to get into positions for passing, receiving and shooting. Out-of-doors, Year 7 pupils run with varying degrees of speed and endurance; they measure their own performance and recognise the effects of exercise on their bodies. Pupils taking part in football and rugby practice at lunch-time showed satisfactory football skills for their age. Documentation shows that by the end of Key Stage 2, virtually all pupils have exceeded the expected standard in swimming, although this was not seen during the inspection. The school has photographic evidence of pupils dancing, but this was not seen during the inspection.

159. In a very successful session in the gym, a class of Year 6 pupils showed very good knowledge and understanding, as well as generally good physical skills. They moved apparatus safely. They warmed up and stretched ready for action, and could explain why this was necessary. During the lesson, they recalled the names of some muscles, and learnt others. Although their physical capabilities varied from below average to very good, each pupil participated in planning and rehearsing a sequence of activities, working harmoniously in groups of 5. Some showed good strength and agility; most included various jumps, rolls and balances with appropriate connecting movements. They demonstrate their work confidently and evaluate it knowledgeably.

160. During the inspection, all the lessons in which pupils' physical skills were developed were at least satisfactorily taught, most were good, and one was excellent. One twenty-minute session, when pupils watched a sports video, because of bad weather, was not a satisfactory experience for either the pupils or the teacher. Pupils normally enjoy physical education and learn well. They are keen to be active, but they sometimes talk when they should listen, or show impatience with one another. By contrast, the Year 6 pupils in the gym behaved in an exemplary fashion, taking responsibility, encouraging one another and exercising self-discipline when holding positions, or when listening to the teacher without fidgeting.

161. The school's specialist physical education teachers give pupils excellent role models. They are fit and enthusiastic, demonstrate skills confidently, and give leadership in activities. They know pupils' individual capabilities and personalities very well, and make good use of this knowledge to stimulate and encourage pupils to work to the best of their abilities. They communicate to their pupils high, but realistic, expectations about what will be achieved during the lesson, or over a period of time. The best lessons are rigorous, but also friendly and fun for the whole class. Pupils respond by showing a high level of motivation and working hard, both physically and by thinking about what they are doing.

162. A very full programme of extra-curricular opportunities, including some adventurous outdoor activities and competitive games, is organised by the coordinator and her colleagues. This does much to meet the needs and wishes of enthusiastic pupils, but the school's current timetable limits physical education time to below the normal percentage of the curriculum in Key Stage 3.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

163. Religious education is a strength of the school and adds very considerably to its ethos and values. As a result of the strong focus on spiritual and moral values, the consideration given to religion in other cultures, and the good opportunities for working together, it provides excellent opportunities for pupils' personal development.

164. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the expectations of the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus. By the end of the key stage pupils know the key features of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They know what it means to belong to a Christian, Jewish or Islamic community. They have a good awareness of the importance of the Bible, the Torah and the Qur'an. They are beginning to understand how religious beliefs can affect people's behaviour. Although, in a piece of work on 'milestones', they had begun to recognise key stages in their personal development, they are not yet well able to reflect on and learn from what they have found out about religion.

165. The overall attainment of pupils when they leave at the end of Year 8 has improved since the last inspection and is now above the standard expected of the agreed syllabus. By the middle of Year 8 pupils have developed very good skills in the use of secondary sources to draw up witness reports on the different responses to Jesus during the events of Holy Week. They have explored what it means to grow up as a Jew and have begun to tackle questions about the meaning of life. In the unit of work 'Who am I?' they made very considerable progress in developing their self-awareness and began to recognise their own spiritual and moral values.

166. Pupils develop good written and oral skills in religious education, although there are some weaknesses in the spelling of key words. Older pupils have begun to use information technology in their work. Most word-process and can use a CD-ROM such as 'Investigating Christianity' to research information, for example, in a project about Jesus.

167. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. At times it is very good. The religious education curriculum provides pupils with a rich range of learning experiences and teachers make very good use of the wide range of excellent resources to catch pupils' interest. Very good use is made of visiting speakers, as in a lesson on the church community when the parish youth worker was able to give pupils a first hand account of his work. Visits are made to places of worship, such as a parish church, and places of pilgrimage such as Walsingham.

168. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and have high expectations of their pupils. They make good use of visual focuses, such as a large wooden cross and flash cards in a lesson on religious symbols. This helps pupils make good progress by increasing their understanding of key ideas, such as the Christian hope in life after death. Most teachers manage their classes and organise lessons very well. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to work on their own or in small groups. The pupils respond well and, in most cases, their attitudes and behaviour are good. They clearly enjoy this area of study. Homework is used well to review what has been learnt and to prepare for the next lesson. Because of the well structured approach to teaching and the interest in the

subject that is shown by the teachers, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, learn well and make good progress. In a series of lessons on the events of Holy Week, pupils of all abilities worked very hard and at a brisk pace to develop their 'witness statements'. Four high ability pupils produced work of a very high standard.

169. Pupils' ability to work responsibly with resources, such as books and computers, outside the classroom is particularly good. Although some use is made of computers to help with learning, this now needs to be extended further. Also, progress would be even better if teachers used the helpful guidance in the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus to make clear the different learning targets for pupils of differing abilities. This addition would also improve the quality of day-to-day marking and ongoing assessment. There is a need to make better use was made of individual education plans in lesson planning.

170. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and careful planning has successfully steered the department forward. Good progress has been made in tackling the issues raised by the last inspection. None of the teaching seen was less than satisfactory; and there is now little difference in the progress made by boys and girls; much more is being done to monitor the work of non-specialist teachers, although this needs to be linked more closely to opportunities for their professional development. The scheme of work fully reflects the requirements of the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus.